

THE MESSENGER

Published by the First Baptist Church of Altamont, Illinois



January 2011



Our Mission:

"The First Baptist Church of Altamont seeks to glorify God by worshiping together, enjoying the fellowship of one another, providing opportunities for people to grow in Christ, ministering to the needs of all, and reaching people for Christ."

Pastor's Paragraphs

I therefore, a prisoner for the Lord, urge you to walk in a manner worthy of the calling to which you have been called, ²with all humility and gentleness, with patience, bearing with one another in love, ³eager to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.

Ephesians 4:1-3 (ESV)

We're embarking on a New Year, and our minds are drawn to new commitments, or even fresh versions of previous commitments. Whether your hope for 2011 includes a better way of balancing your budget, or simply finding less of you to balance on your bathroom scales, almost everyone is in a mood to consider change as the New Year approaches. The challenge from the Bible could encompass all of that change. To put it simply, the Bible's message is that we're expected to walk in a different way, once we follow Christ. It doesn't matter if a crowd is watching or if no one at all is watching. It doesn't matter if the task is easy or difficult. It doesn't matter about the circumstances, the physical, emotional, or even spiritual strain.

Walking as a follower of Jesus requires a different step than the rest of the world. Walking in a way that honors Christ may sound like a major decision ... to walk in a way worthy of your calling. But in a sense, this major decision is made with a long series – a lifetime, even – of minor decisions. You just make them one at a time, like one little step at a time, and pretty soon, you're walking in a brand new way, right into a brand new year.

In His Service,
Pastor Lowell

First Baptist Church of Altamont



Leadership Teams



Discipleship
Paula Putnam

Evangelism & Missions
Linda & Larry Riley

Fellowship
Janet Hunsaker

Ministry
Pastor Lowell Donnelley

Worship & Music
Dr. Mirta Donnelley

December AM Sermon Series

In January, Pastor Lowell will begin teaching through Paul's Letter to the Colossians. The series is entitled "*Becoming All God Wants You to Be.*" After we're saved God leaves us here for two reasons: to win others to Christ and to allow time for us to be become all He wants us to be. Colossians is about becoming all God wants us to be.

The sermon titles and Scripture passages for January are:

January	2	Becoming All God Wants You to Be	1:1-8
	9	Finding God's Will for Your Life	1:9-14
	16	Letting Jesus Fulfill All Your Needs	1:15-23
	23	Having Your Own Successful Ministry	1:24-29
	30	Growing in Christ	2:1-7

Adult Sunday Evening Devotions

We hope you will join us each Sunday evening at 4:45 pm as we share in a brief devotional and prayer time. You are also invited and encouraged to stay and help with our AWANA program that follows at 5:30 pm. Regular devotions will resume January 9th.

Ministry Team Moments



January Youth Event



No January events planned, so take advantage of all those basketball games—plan to go together and enjoy them as a group or organize a Game Day party for youth peers at your home!

Stay tuned to the February Messenger and the weekly February bulletins for the February event—A **True Love Waits** date night with a dinner.

Shut-In Ministry

"Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ ..." Eph 1:3

HAPPY NEW YEAR! May our Lord richly bless each and every one in our church fellowship in this new year!

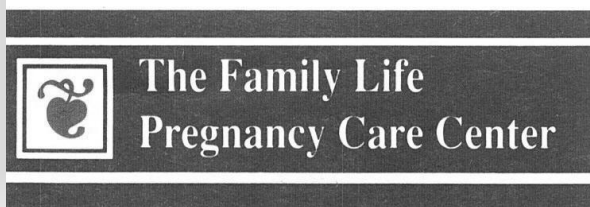
If you have an interest to serve in this ministry or if you know someone in our body in need of encouragement, please contact **Alice Potts (618.483.3126)** or **Nancy Byars (618.483.9826)**.



Evangelism & Missions Mentions

January Missions Focus ~ Family Life Pregnancy Care Center, Effingham

Marriage and family therapists diagnose and treat mental and emotional issues and concerns within marriages, couples, and families. They offer free pregnancy tests, post-abortion counseling, assistance for the Mother-to-Be (finding a doctor, available social services, nice maternity clothes, new and used baby clothes, baby furniture, baby layette), teen mother support, and a quarterly newsletter for Moms.



They can use prayer support, items listed above, financial donations, and everyday baby care items. Please drop your items in the designated area in the basement or send a youth downstairs with them!

Worship & Music Team Wonderings

Music Notes

December was a special time as we celebrated the birth of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ! I received very positive feedback concerning the Chancel Choir's performance on December 5th and the children's presentation of **The Bethlehem Project** on December 19th. I would like to thank each of you who participated or helped in any way with these productions. Many of you worked tirelessly behind the scenes to make them so successful.

As we begin a New Year I would to ask you to consider if God is leading you to participate in our Music Ministry. I would love to see more of you to participate in 2011! I wish each of you a great New Year!

In Christ,
Mirta



Children: Please return any **Bethlehem Project** books to the church you may still have. Enjoy the music CD at home!

Fellowship Findings

The Fellowship Team has had a busy year indeed! We have a very dedicated, hardworking, wonderful group on board, so we were able to handle each event successfully.

Our soup and sandwich luncheon after our morning Worship Service in December was outstanding. We had seven different kinds of soup, and an array of sandwiches and desserts. We served about 85 people and could have easily served more.

We will be taking the month of January off, but will be planning a Valentine celebration in February.

We believe God's people should get together to fellowship, have a meal, and have fun. We believe this draws us closer as we get to know each other better.

The Fellowship Team wishes God's blessings on all of you, for a healthy, happy, and blessed new year!

Janet

P.S. Please join in the family fun here for Family Game Night from 5-10 pm on New Year's Eve!

Discipleship Doings

Women's Bible Study

This ladies group has taken a brief break through the Christmas season but will resume Tuesday sessions on January 4th at 1:30 pm at the Nancy Powell residence. *All are welcome to attend!*

TREK

**< Jr/Sr High Bible Study >
Sundays at 6:00 pm**

Join us as we work through the Roadsign series.
All youth are encouraged to participate!



Sunday School

We invite you to attend Bible study each Sunday from 9:00 – 10:00 am.

Classes are available for all ages!

Mid-Week Bible Study and Prayer

In January, Pastor Lowell will continue leading a study on The Tabernacle entitled, "God's Model for True Worship."

January	12	"Requirements for Serving God" (the Laver)
	26	"Getting Close to God" (the Tabernacle Proper)



Sundays from 5:30 – 7:00 pm

Open to age 4 through grade 6.

Our children’s Bible program actively supports mission efforts, enjoys a fun-filled theme night each month, and awards our clubbers for working hard on their AWANA handbook Bible memorization. Invite your neighbor kids to attend and check us out!

AWANA club will not be held January 2 but will resume Sunday—January 9, 2011.

So, take advantage of the Family Game Night on New Year’s Eve here at the church from 7 – 10 pm. Please call in your reservation to the church office at 618/483-3250 by Dec 30th.

Church Administration

Please call....

If you or someone you know is ill, injured, admitted to the hospital, and/or needs pastoral ministry, please call the Pastor, your deacon or any of the other deacons.



Pastor Lowell

483-3250	<i>church</i>
483-5264	<i>home</i>
618/553-5560	<i>cell phone</i>

Kieffer Milam	618/483-6374
Larry Riley	217/868-5751
Art Davidson	618/483-6577
Jim Pritchard	217/663-4235
Ron Hite	618/483-5058
Randy McElroy	618/245-9155
Duane Guffey	217/536-5727

Likable humorous authors!

Interesting family topics!

Bibles in several translations!

Research material galore!

Appealing Christian fiction!

Remarkable music!

You can use daily devotion materials!



Church Ministry Leadership Team (CMLT)

All church leaders are invited and encouraged to attend our CMLT meetings scheduled for **6:30 pm** on the first Tuesday of every month.

Tuesday ~ January 4th @ 6:30 pm

Prayer Requests

If you have a prayer need, update or praise for the church Prayer List, please drop off a note or email it to the office at:

secretary@altamontfirstbaptist.org



Baptist Questions, Baptist Answers

Pastor Lowell shares the following excerpts from the book, "Baptist Questions, Baptist Answers: Exploring Christian Faith" written by Dr. Bill Leonard.

How do we know God?

In the beginning God ... "-so Gen. 1: 1 introduces the Hebrew Scriptures, and the Christian texts echo that affirmation with the writer of Hebrews' words that we believe God **"is and ... is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him"** (Heb. 11:6 KJV). God is present in creation and draws near to those who are thus created. Like their Catholic and Protestant counterparts, Baptists start with the assertion that God exists and is the author of both creation and salvation. The First London Confession of Faith, written by Particular Baptists in 1644, begins with a statement on the nature of God:

That God as he is in himself, cannot be comprehended of any but himself, dwelling in that inaccessible light, that no eye can attain unto, whom never man saw, nor can see; that there is but one God, one Christ, one Spirit, one Faith, one Baptism; one Rule of holiness and obedience for all Saints, at all times, in all places to be observed. (Lumpkin, 156)

Baptists thus insist that God is not only "knowable" but that God seeks us out and is ready for fellowship whenever it is offered by the faithful. Perhaps it is less a question of our knowing God than it is an abiding assertion that "God knows us."

Faith in God begins with mystery and transcendence. As the hymn declares,

***Immortal, invisible, God only wise;
In light inaccessible, hid from our eyes***

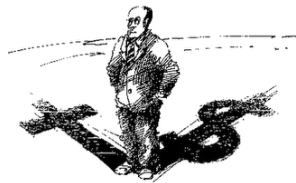
God is separate from us, above us, beyond us, outside us. Yet for reasons we cannot fully comprehend, God has chosen to come to us, most clearly in Jesus Christ, God's "only begotten Son." In Christ, the Unknowable One has become known. Thus, if Baptists begin with God, they continue with God's revelation in Jesus Christ. In the mystery of God's existence, Baptists sing the rest of the hymn:

***Most blessed, most glorious, the Ancient of Days
Almighty, victorious, Thy great name we praise!***

Adult Midweek Programs

We invite you to attend midweek programs each Wednesday at 6:30 pm. The first week of each month we have a **Missions Night program**, and the third week we have our monthly **Business Meeting**. The remaining weeks we have prayer and Discipleship Training, so please join us here on Wednesday nights!

Money Matters in Church



A focal point is something we acutely need in order to negotiate the maze of choices and all the tugs-both internal and external-concerning money and possessions. In his book *Celebration of Discipline*, Richard Foster suggests,

Inwardly modern man is fractured and fragmented. He is trapped in a maze of competing attachments. One moment he makes decisions on the basis of sound reason and the next moment out of fear of what others will think of him. He has no unity or focus around which life is oriented.

Such a focal point is just what Jesus provides in Matthew 6:33 when he says, "**But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well.**" The importance of Jesus' words cannot be overstated. According to him, *everything* hinges on putting the first things first.

What would this week look like if you really sought first God's kingdom and righteousness-particularly concerning your money and possessions? As you contemplate purchases, financial decisions, or lifestyle choices, stop and ask, "How can I seek first his kingdom and his righteousness right now in this choice?" If the answer isn't immediately clear (and often it won't be), consider waiting before acting, if possible. Invite a few trusted believers into the conversation. Pray about it. Let Scripture speak to you. Seek the Spirit's guidance.

In The New Year

In the New Year,
we wish you the best year you've ever had,
and that each New Year
will be better than the last.

May you realize your fondest dreams
and take time to recognize and enjoy
each and every blessing.

Happy New Year,
And many more!

By Joanna Fuchs

Member Minutes

Joining the Church

You may become a member of our church by:

1. Profession of Faith & Baptism—If you receive Jesus Christ as your personal Lord and Savior and follow Him in baptism by immersion.
2. Promise of Church Letter—You can transfer your membership from another Southern Baptist Church or a church of like faith and order.
3. Statement of Faith—If you have already accepted Jesus Christ as personal Lord and Savior and have been baptized by immersion as a believer in a church of like faith and order.
4. Baptism—If you are a Christian but have never been baptized by immersion.



January Birthdays!



- 1—Melvin Williams
- 7—Robin Heltsley
- 14—Nate Brown
- 19—Lee Mathis
- 20—Charlie Goldsborough
- 22—Ellie Hackmann
- 24—Lester Duckwitz
- 26—Devin Durbin
- 28—Madalon Stonum

Happy Anniversary

January 2 Doc & Una Tish

January 19 Gene & Vivian Robertson

Member of the Month

I have contacted enough members for two years' worth of articles, eleven of which appeared to be willing to be interviewed. I have checked back again with those, in some cases a second time, but have not been successful in finding a person who has had the time. I hesitated to venture too far in the future, which apparently was a mistake. I would appreciate any member who is willing and has the time to give me basic information, to contact me. We could handle by e-mail, phone, a personal visit or a combination.

Melvin

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Cell 618-322-1952

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